DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 955 IR 054 627

AUTHOR Grigg, Karen L.
TITLE Censorship and Selection.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 63p.; Specialist in Education in Library Media Technology, Georgia State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Censorship; Childrens Literature; Elementary Education; *Intellectual Freedom; Learning Resources Centers; *Librarians; *Library Material Selection; Library Surveys; *Media Specialists; Ouestionnaires; School Libraries; Statistical Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia; *Library Policy

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if a gap exists between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and their practice of materials selection. Randomly chosen media specialists were sent a questionnaire, results of which were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The majority of the media specialists employ established criteria to select materials. Of those responding, 62.4% agreed that media specialists should articulate principles of intellectual freedom and oppose censorship. Close to half use their own political or aesthetic views when selecting materials. They have engaged in censorship in circumstances where the selection of materials would cause bad public relations or where language or sexual references could be offensive. Over half had placed materials on restricted use. Georgia elementary media specialists strongly feel that the nature of an elementary media specialist's job necessitates that some censorship take place. Nine out of 10 respondents reported that selection choices are a value judgement appropriate for their patrons as opposed to a First Amendment question. The research shows that the unique mission of the elementary media center has perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information due to budget constraints and to the young age of the media center patrons. A copy of the survey instrument and examples of open-ended responses are appended. (Contains 22 references.) (KRN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

[ ] This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

[ ] Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 360 955

CENSORSHIP AND SELECTION

by
KAREN L. GRIGG

A SCHOLARLY STUDY

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for the Degree of Specialist in Education in
Library Media Technology in the Department
of Curriculum and Instruction
in the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia
1993

IR054617

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Karen L. Grigg

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

CENSORSHIP AND SELECTION

by
Karen L. Grigg

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine if a gap existed between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Subjects were randomly selected from media specialists employed in elementary schools in the state of Georgia. A 26-item questionnaire was designed to gather the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Chi-square values were calculated to evaluate the significance of differences in the responses received from urban schools and those received from rural schools.

RESULTS

The majority of Georgia elementary media specialists employ established criteria to select materials. Of those responding, 62.4% agreed that media specialists should articulate principles of intellectual freedom and oppose censorship. Close to half of the media specialists use their own political or aesthetic views when selecting materials. Elementary media specialists have engaged in censorship in circumstances where the selection of materials would cause bad public relations or where language or sexual references would seemingly be offensive. Over half (57%) had placed materials on restricted use at one time or another.

CONCLUSIONS

Georgia elementary media specialists strongly feel that the nature of an elementary media specialist's job necessitates that some censorship take place. Nine out of 10 respondents reported that selection choices are a value judgment appropriate for their patrons as opposed to a First Amendment question. The research shows that the unique mission of the elementary media center has perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information due to budget constraints and to the young age of the media center patrons.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		ii
LIST OF TABLES		v
CHAPTER		
1	Overview	1
	Statement of the Problem	4
	Significance of the Study	4
	Assumptions	5
	Limitations	5
	Delimitations	5
	Definition of Terms	5
2	Review of the Literature	7
	Selection Versus Censorship	7
	Establishing Selection Policies	14
	Influencing Factors on Selection Practices	17
	Areas of Controversy	20
	Summary	22
3	Methodology and Procedures	23
	Population	23
	Instrumentation	24
	Data Collection	25
	Data Analysis	25
4	Results	26
	Research Question 1	26
	Research Question 2	30
	Research Question 3	34
	Open-Ended Question	36
	Chi-Square Calculations	37
	Demographics	38
5	Discussion and Conclusions	39
	Findings	39
	Discussion	40
	Application	46

Page

REFERENCES 47

APPENDIXES:

A. Library Bill of Rights 49
B. Survey Questionnaire 50
C. Cover Letter to Pretest Group 53
D. Participant Letter 54
E. Follow-Up Letter 55
F. Representative Open-Ended Responses 56

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Questionnaires Returned by Type of School with Percentages for Rate of Return	26
2	Criteria That Influence Media Specialists' Selection Practices	27
3	Number of Schools Reporting Challenges	29
4	Types of Challenges	29
5	Responsibility for Initiating Challenges	30
6	Nature of Reported Objections	31
7	Disposition of Challenged Materials	31
8	Circumstances Under Which Georgia Media Specialists Censored Materials	32
9	Explanation of How Materials Are Placed on Restricted Use	33
10	Reasons for Removing Materials from Established Collections	34
11	Factors Which Contribute to the Uniqueness of the Mission of the Elementary Media Center . . .	35
12	Other Concerns of Media Specialists Related to Selection and Censorship	36
13	Items of Significance Between Urban and Rural Respondents	37

CHAPTER 1

Overview

> Libraries provide to everyone the opportunity to acquire knowledge and to search for truth. It is through books and other materials that this search begins. . . . And in this process of acquiring knowledge and searching for the truth, our citizens, regardless of their age, learn to discriminate and choose from myriad conflicting points of view. In short, they learn to exercise the power of thinking. (Ulm, 1992)

Most Americans find censorship distasteful, but the commitment becomes cloudy where children are concerned. The responsibility to choose library materials and to reject others according to predetermined standards is pivotal to education's mission. The purpose of education is not only to communicate factual information but also to develop in the young the ability to discriminate and choose (Reichman, 1988). Schafly (cited in Orr, 1990) stated that no library buys every book published. Decisions are made daily by librarians to select some books while excluding others. She called this "select and exclude" process preemptive censorship. Manley (cited in Orr, 1990) supported this theory, stating that all librarians censor by the choices they make, and they should not be ashamed or made to feel that they are betraying their professional ethics.

Dority (1991) felt public schools are under seige and held hostage by those who would impose a narrow view of life on all our children. The procensorship stance tries to protect us from the perceived harmful effects of what we read, see, and hear. It is done to "protect" children from learning about the real world and to protect them from sexual imagery and words. As a result of this climate, many media specialists are actively engaging in self-censorship: they do not order "possibly controversial" books.

Selection must be carried out by trained professionals familiar with the multitude of choices and guided by insight of the educational mission to be accomplished. Professional training enables a media specialist to develop the ability to recognize and ignore personal bias. Academic freedom is generally understood to guarantee media specialists the right to build an appropriate collection according to established policies and procedures without external influences (Reichman, 1988). Orr (1990) believed that in a democracy a wide range of materials from all points of view should be available. Schools, where students are under the guidance of responsible adults, are the perfect places to expose children to dissenting opinions. The American Library Association (ALA) has long believed that it is the responsibility of librarians to furnish the public the widest range of materials (cited in Bechtold, Dorman, Lott, & Van Horn, 1984).

The censor of library materials is usually a genuinely concerned parent. Parents may believe that certain materials will corrupt children, offend sensitive readers, or undermine basic values and beliefs. School personnel may initiate removals on their own, either to ward off perceived threats or to impose their own values on the educational process. Potentially controversial materials may not be acquired in the first place. Sometimes librarians censor in response to previous controversy and the need to avoid conflict. The attitude seems to be "Let's do it for them before they do it to us" (Reichman, 1988).

Several areas of controversy exist in the educational censorship debate. The most frequent objection against library books is that they use inappropriate language. Related to "moral values" and a highly challenged area is the treatment of sexuality in literature. Recently, library materials have been challenged because they advocate the "religion" of "secular humanism." Materials thought to oppose traditional religion or morality as well as those that present opposing views have drawn controversy. In elementary schools one of the most controversial issues is the charge that library materials promote witchcraft or interest in the occult. Finally, awareness of the rights and sensitivities of minorities and women have caused increased efforts to remove materials from libraries (Burress, 1989; Reichman, 1988; Ulm, 1992).

Statement of the Problem

In light of the controversy between intellectual freedom and censorship and the continuing challenges to educational materials, this study sought to determine if a gap existed between perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes. The following research questions were posed:

1. What criteria have influenced elementary media specialists' selection practices?

2. Were there circumstances under which media specialists engaged in censorship?

3. Has the uniqueness of the mission of the elementary media center perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information?

Significance of the Study

This study sought to determine if media specialists in Georgia elementary schools practice censorship in their selection processes. Much of the literature addressed challenges to materials at the high school level. Little has been published, recently, relating to the topic of selection and censorship. This study provides knowledge as to whether censorship is taking place in Georgia elementary school media centers and under what circumstances. The forces of censorship continue to encroach upon intellectual freedom in insidious ways. This study could increase

cognizance of the small occurrences of censorship that may not be perceived as such. Conversely, the results may show that media specialists are in a unique position and that, at times, censorship in the selection process is a desirable practice that should not cause undue anxiety about infringement of the "right to know."

Assumptions

The study assumed that media specialists select materials that support the curriculum of the school district in which they are employed.

Limitations

Due to the sensitivity of the research questions, a self-report bias may exist. Underreporting of what is perceived to be socially undesirable and overrreporting of what is perceived to be socially desirable may occur.

Delimitations

This study was limited to media specialists in elementary schools in Georgia and, therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other grade levels or populations outside the state.

Definition of Terms

The definitions which follow clarify the terms used in the study:

Censorship: the removal, suppression, or restriction of literary, artistic, or educational materials on the

ground that these are morally or otherwise objectionable in light of standards applied by the censor.

Academic freedom: the freedom to teach and learn.

Intellectual freedom: the right of every person to hold any belief on a subject and the right of a person to express his/her beliefs or ideas in whatever way he/she considers appropriate.

Library Bill of Rights: a statement by the American Library Association (ALA) concerning basic policies for all libraries. See Appendix A for a copy of this statement.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The literature reveals a pronounced debate on what constitutes selection and what constitutes censorship. This discussion leads to a review of selection processes recommended to assuage challenge attempts. Factors that may influence a media specialist to censor are discussed. Finally, major reasons children's books have been challenged are reviewed.

Selection Versus Censorship

Do parents have a right to forbid that their children be exposed to specific cultural, moral, religious, ethnic, scientific, or political views and materials? Do students have a right to learn about a subject--a "right to know"? What academic and professional rights do media specialists have regarding material selection? These questions have been debated with no definitive answer as long as libraries have existed. The word censorship originated with the office of "censor," a Roman official whose job was to uphold morality and restrict misconduct (Wynne, 1985, cited in Jalongo & Creany, 1991). Censorship was noted as long ago as 389 B.C., when Plato recommended monitoring the tales of Homer and other fiction writers (Hansen, 1987).

Censorship of children's literature is a relatively recent phenomenon. Prior to 1960 the topics dealt with in children's literature were not ones that were thought unsuitable for children (Giblin, 1986, cited in Jalongo & Creany, 1991). During the 1960s, American society became more dominated by images seen on television. Children became aware of the world at an earlier age, and eventually topics once thought unsuitable for children appeared in children's books (Holland, 1980a, 1980b). Through the 1970s censorship increased. According to Jalongo and Creany (1991), the current trend of literature-based language arts will cause the scrutiny of children's books to continue.

The Library Bill of Rights (see Appendix A) sets forth guidelines for all libraries to ensure intellectual freedom for their patrons. The American Library Association (ALA) stated that it is in the public interest to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox and unpopular with the majority. This organization states that media specialists do not have to endorse every idea presented in books they select. ALA also stated that it would conflict with the public interest for media specialists to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as standards for determining what books should be circulated. They also contended that it is contrary to the public interest for libraries to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal

history or politics of the author (ALA, 1972, cited in Orr, 1990).

Krug (1992) stated that a librarian's basic role is to make ideas and information, in whatever form they appear, available and accessible to anyone who needs them or wants them. Libraries cannot have on their shelves only those materials that library personnel like. Librarians have the responsibility to provide the whole gamut of ideas and information. Information Power (American Association of School Librarians [AASL] and Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT], 1988) stated that library media specialists must continue to maintain free access to materials through collection development policies as well as program and access policies. Ensuring access while accommodating users' needs, interests, and maturation levels is a concern for all educators (Bechtold et al., 1984). Klein (cited in Orr, 1990) stated: "If we strip libraries we will be creating a generation of young people who are not capable of thinking and understanding either themselves, or other human beings, or the world at large. Fighting censorship is a way of insuring our future as a nation."

Huckleberry Finn has been challenged numerous times in response to the charge that it should be removed because of the use of a vile epithet as the name of one of its characters. In response to the charge that it should be removed because the book is insensitive to a large and

important community of citizens in this country, Meschach Taylor, an actor who portrayed Jim in the Broadway production of "The Big River," stated:

> We cannot afford to remove any person's history. For how can any person, child or adult, determine where he is today if he does not have that history. And if he does not have that history, if he does not know how he got to where he is today, he can never determine the path to follow tomorrow. (Quoted in Krug, 1992, p. 6)

In many states a student's right to think is on trial. As Clarence Darrow asked in the movie Inherit the Wind, if schools are not to challenge the mind, "Why were we plagued with the power to think?" (quoted in McDaniel, 1991/1992, p. 85). As stated by the United States Supreme Court in Pico v. Island Trees, materials must never be removed or restricted for the purpose of suppressing ideas (Reichman, 1988). Kister (1990) felt that sometimes the censor may have a point worth hearing. Media specialists do, at times, make mistakes in their selection practices.

Manley (cited in Orr, 1990) felt there is a tremendous gap between what many practicing media specialists facing the public every day think about intellectual freedom and what they say they think. He claimed that the battle for intellectual freedom has been won--that there are no serious and effective censors left to condemn. The one area of contention left is the public school media center. Manley stated that study after study (not cited) has shown that institutional censorship is widely practiced. Yet, there is such a stigma to being a censor that no one will overcome

peer pressure and admit that media specialists practice censorship systematically and regularly. Manley continued to say that there are legitimate limits to intellectual freedom in media centers. Krug (1992) said the First Amendment does not encourage a "qualified" intellectual freedom concept, but media specialists are public servants, and, perhaps, should exercise sensitivity.

Manley (cited in Orr, 1990) did not believe there was a contradiction between preaching an adherence to intellectual freedom and constructing and adhering to clear, systematic standards of selection within the narrow confines of the school library. Justifiable standards for not buying books could be set up; and the media specialist would have acted in a responsible, defensible manner and would not have abandoned principles of intellectual freedom. Manley stated that choices made by media specialists do not contradict the First Amendment, since those choices in no way restrict the right of others to print their works. One can say a book has the right to be published but that it is not appropriate for a school media center collection. Blocking access in a school media center is not blocking access in the private sector.

Schafly (cited in Orr, 1990) pointed out that taxpayers pay the bill for books; therefore, it is essential that those who choose what books to buy be accountable to the values of those who pay the bills. She felt schools should have respect for parents' beliefs and attitudes. Schools

should make every effort to avoid offending the religious, ethical, cultural, and ethnic values of students and their parents. She stated that the issue over any particular book is one of appropriateness (a value judgment), not the First Amendment or "academic freedom." While media specialists make decisions every day about what to include and exclude from their collection, Schafly technically saw this as a preemptive type of censorship that is justifiable. While media personnel have historical knowledge, fairness, and mature judgment to make these decisions, the public has the right to question whether any preemptive censorship is carried out because of personal bias or from a genuine attempt to provide a quality collection.

Jalongo and Creany (1991) stated that the distinction between censorship and selection is fundamentally rooted in three things: the child, the book, and the society at large. From a censor's point of view, the child is a blank slate. Censors want to keep this slate clean. They feel children are impressionable and books can corrupt them. Adults who advocate selection respect the child's intellectual freedom and believe adults have an obligation to be honest with children (L'Engle, 1987, cited in Jalongo & Creany, 1991). Selection evokes standards for quality literature, guidelines, and knowledge of child development when making decisions about children's books (Jalongo & Creany, 1991).

When dealing with books, the selection advocate's goal is to give children access to the best literature available. Even though some books reflect stereotypes, they feel these books should be shared with children but introduced with a disclaimer. Selection operates from a standard agreed upon by the group, looks at the total work, and is essentially positive. Censorship tends to take a reactionary stance. It takes words out of context as well as pictures, is essentially negative, and has book banning as its goal (National Council of Teachers of English, 1982, cited in Jalongo & Creany, 1991).

A censor's view of society sees evil lurking and feels the need to eradicate it in literature. Censors do this by labeling, removing, or restricting certain books they consider controversial. A censor makes moral decisions for others (National Council of Teachers of English, 1982, cited in Jalongo & Creany, 1991). Selection advocates see quality as elusive, and it needs to be supported in a wide variety of forms in society. Their purpose is to advise, educate, and increase options. Individual differences are respected. They feel people can agree to disagree without becoming adversaries and have a high tolerance for national diversity (Jalongo & Creany, 1991). Jalongo and Creany (1991) felt the debate about children's books is here to stay--a debate that reflects America's changing view of childhood and society.

Establishing Selection Policies

Efforts to remove books from public access have divided communities into "us" and "them." A constructive solution is to develop a system of procedures for selecting quality materials, as well as strategies to defuse and solve problems before they explode into community controversy (Bechtold et al., 1984).

McAfee (1992) stated that where a materials selection policy existed, was approved by the school board, and was used during a challenge, the material was more likely to be retained. Information Power (AASL & AECT, 1988) stated that all schools within a district must adhere to a common, district-wide selection policy that has been adopted by the board of education as an official district policy. A district policy accomplishes the following: (a) establishes the only legal basis for selecting and removing materials, (b) establishes the objectives for selection of materials, (c) identifies responsibilities of personnel who participate in the selection process, and (d) identifies types of materials and equipment to be considered.

In a survey conducted by McAfee (1992) in high school media centers in the United States, it was reported that 73.1% of those responding had written, board-approved selection policies, while 26.9% reported no policy or being unaware of the existing policy. In response to the question "To what extent do you feel under pressure from others in the selection of library materials?" the majority (84.9%)

indicated feeling under little or no pressure; 15.1% reported "very much" pressure or "somewhat." Media specialists who reported challenges during the period 1986-1987 were twice as likely to report feeling under pressure in the selection of materials as those who did not report challenges.

Wools (1988) stated that all materials selected by a media specialist should meet the criteria of the library media center selection policy. If no policy exists, the media specialist should write one that conforms to the American Library Association standards. Bechtold et al. (1984) suggested the following selection objectives taken from the Darby Public School District in Darby, Montana:

1. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual material, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.

2. Provide a background of information which will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their lives.

3. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that users may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis.

4. Provide materials which realistically represent our pluralistic society and reflect the contributions made by these groups and individuals to our American heritage.

5. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest

quality in order to assure a comprehensive media collection appropriate for the users.

Censorship and professional guidelines sometimes appear similar because both involve selection from a multitude of alternatives. However, censorship and professional guidelines may be distinguished from each other. Whereas the goal of censorship is to remove, eliminate, or bar particular materials and methods, the goal of professional guidelines is to provide criteria for selection of materials and methods (Bechtold et al., 1984).

Selection criteria need to be spelled out specifically to guide the staff repsonsible for selection and to minimize arbitrary and personal elements that may influence even carefully structured selection processes. The following specific criteria may be listed in a selection policy: (a) educational significance; (b) contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum and to the interest of the students; (c) favorable recommendations based on preview and examination by professional personnel; (d) favorable reviews found in standard selection sources; (e) reputation and significance of the author; (f) validity, up-to-datedness, and appropriateness of the materials; (g) contribution the material makes to breadth of representative viewpoints; (h) high degree of potential user appeal; (i) high artistic quality and/or literary style; (j) quality and variety of format; (k) value commensurate with cost and/or needs; (l) timeliness or permanence; and (m) integrity (Reichman,

1988). According to Reichman (1988), librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet the needs and interests of all persons in the community which the library serves.

Influencing Factors on Selection Practices

The 1991-92 school year was "the worst year on record" for school censorship, with 367 separate attacks on books and other learning materials. Censorship activity was found in every region of the United States and in 44 states. The number of incidents was 50% higher than in the 1990-91 school year. In 41% of the incidents learning materials were removed or restricted. Challenges to library materials more than doubled from 72 to 173 (Eskey, 1992). To that figure one has to add the restrictions due to widespread self-censorship in which media specialists engage in an attempt to avoid confrontation with a new wave of censors (Scales, 1987, cited in Orr, 1990).

Research shows that the second most frequent source of censorship remains members of the school staff--teachers, administrators, or media specialists (Burress, 1989). Several cases have been reported of administrators or teachers stealing books in order to assure their removal. Taking books without checking them out is fairly common. Administrators have frequently taken a book from the

media center and not returned it (Burress, 1989). The aftermath of censorship for librarians is that teachers, administrators, and school boards may avoid controversial books to avoid conflict. With challenge rates hovering around 30%, librarians report that they frequently censor themselves rather than becoming confrontational with a library patron (Jalongo & Creany, 1991).

When parents challenged, books were removed 40% of the time. When school personnel challenged, the materials were removed 75% of the time. Removal was not the only response. Often books were "put in a back room" so kids did not have free access (Burress, 1989). Major barriers between students and resources include imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources, requiring special permission from parents or teachers, and establishing restricted shelves or closed collections (AASL & AECT, 1988).

Many librarians believe that by careful selection they can avoid censorship pressures. They argue, therefore, that the quality of selection will determine the frequency of censorship attempts, ignoring the impossibility of defining the term "quality of collection." Other school libraries adopt the position that the only function of the library is to supply the best books or to raise the reader's standard of taste. Many see this as an elitist position (Burress, 1989).

Racine, Wisconsin, has already had an experience with fiscal censorship when administrators refused to allocate funds to buy replacement copies of a controversial book. In Racine, book titles must be listed on a purchase order and assigned subject areas, so they can easily be red-lined by administrators. Any library that receives state funding in any form may be placed under enormous pressure to conform to legislative mandate. Inevitably, media specialists will censor themselves more effectively than a state agency could hope to do (Lee, 1989).

Numerous school systems in Texas did not mention Halloween last year. Teachers had been warned not to. Similar situations occurred in Maryland and Florida. Many librarians have curtailed celebration of the day (Krug, 1991).

As reported by Algeo and Zirkel (1987), past court cases fall into two categories: those in which teachers brought suits against school districts for depriving them of their rights to academic freedom in their teaching, and those brought by parents or students against the district the students attended. Parents' and students' suits focused on questions of obscenity or issues of religious freedom (Jongsma, 1991). Another result of censorship pressure is the loss of some well-qualified teachers or librarians from schools (Burress, 1989). Knowing this occurs could influence selection practices of some media specialists.

Areas of Controversy

Most complaints stem from a desire to protect children from the harsh realities of life (Jalongo & Creany, 1991). The most frequent objection against library books is that they use inappropriate language. Often the issue of language is closely related to "moral values." There is much acceptance of the belief that obscenity does not merit protection by the First Amendment, as the Supreme Court has said (Reichman, 1988).

The second major area of complaint relates to materials where the sexual content is considered inappropriate (Krug, 1992). The treatment of sexuality in our culture is a major issue that is also linked to concern with morality (Reichman, 1988). Maurice Sendak's In a Night Kitchen and Shel Silverstein's Where the Sidewalk Ends and A Light in the Attic often are challenged in elementary schools because of nudity (Krug, 1992).

Challenges to materials dealing with witchcraft, the supernatural, the occult, or satanism are the fastest growing areas of complaint (Krug, 1992). These complaints have generally been instigated by people who follow a fundamentalist religious point of view. Their feeling is that schools and public libraries are serving an agenda to destroy the minds of children with occult materials, whereas librarians and media specialists feel they are developing minds with imaginative books. Recently, Shel Silverstein's books have come under fire for portraying satanism (Krug,

1992). Roald Dahl's The Witches was placed on a restricted list in Escondido, California, when parents objected to what they saw as the book's promotion of occultism. In talking with students who had read the book, they understood it was a fairy tale and make-believe. They thought it was a "hilarious" story (Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, 1992a).

In recent years, the charge that library materials advocate the "religion" of "secular humanism" has brought objections to materials thought to oppose traditional religion and morality (Reichman, 1988). Books may also be challenged because the content is considered too mature or realistic (Jalongo & Creany, 1991). The literature does not reveal many complaints about violence in the elementary media center. Parents did, however, object to the graphic violence in Snow White, in which a witch orders Snow White's heart torn out and a hunter kills a wild boar. Children must now get permission to check out the book ("Snow White," 1992).

Librarians report increasing pressure from parents and religious organizations concerned about certain literature in the curriculum. Puss and Boots, Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, and St. George and the Dragon have been dropped from reading programs because of parental objections about magic (McDaniel, 1992).

Many books are under criticism for being insufficiently multicultural. Babar recently was criticized for being a

poor role model in that he "extols the virtues of a European middle class lifestyle and disparages the animals and people who have remained in the jungle" (Seligman, 1991, p. 215). Babar's detractors say he represents views associated with world imperialism and Victorian England. It suggests the superiority of one cultural group over another (Seligman, 1991).

Summary

The literature shows that a discussion continues over what constitutes selection and what constitutes censorship in school media centers. Research reveals that schools that have a selection policy are less likely to have materials removed or restricted. Guidelines for selection and for writing selection policies were discussed. Pressures to avoid selecting controversial materials come in many forms, and these factors were revealed in the literature. Finally, the literature revealed many examples of conflict areas in elementary schools that could influence a media specialist's selection policies.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Procedures

This was a descriptive study employing a questionnaire survey methodology. The methodology and procedures used to gather and analyze the data included the following: (a) determination of the population to be surveyed, (b) development of the survey instrument, and (c) analysis of the data. The purpose of the study was to determine if a gap existed between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes.

Population

The population selected for this study consisted of all elementary media specialists in the state of Georgia. The school had to be designated solely as an elementary school to be part of the sample. Schools designated as primary or comprehensive were excluded from the sample. Schools with fewer than four grades were not sampled. Schools were selected from the 1992 Georgia Public Education Directory. A stratified random sample was employed, sampling 10% of the elementary media specialists in Georgia. Differentiation between urban and rural was made by using statistics

provided in the Sourcebook of County Demographics. The United States government designates counties for census purposes as "Metropolitan Statistical Areas." Those counties so designated were used for the urban sample. The others were considered to be rural.

When the lists were compiled, the number 4 was chosen as the starting point. From there, every sixth school was chosen from the list of rural schools, and every sixth school was chosen from the list of urban schools.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument of 29 questions was developed (see Appendix B). Questions 1-6, 16, and 22-24 were designed to answer Research Question 1: What criteria have influenced media specialists' selection practices? Questions 7, 8, 11-15, and 17-19 related to Research Question 2: Were there circumstances under which media specialists engaged in censorship? Questions 9, 10, 20, and 21 were designed to answer Research Question 3: Has the uniqueness of the mission of the elementary media center perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information? The respondents were asked to circle a Yes or No response. In a few instances a Yes response necessitated a short-answer response. Demographic questions were asked, and an open-ended section for comments was included.

The instrument was field tested first with fellow students at Georgia State University. The instrument was

reviewed and revised from this discussion. Then, five elementary media specialists from the Cobb County School District in Marietta, Georgia, were selected to respond to relevancy and clarity of the instrument and the length of completion. Any other comments they had were solicited, and a final revision and refinement was completed upon receipt of these responses (see Appendix C).

Data Collection

The survey questionnaires were mailed on January 4, 1993, with a request to return them by January 15, 1993 (see Appendix D). A follow-up letter was sent on January 18, 1993, to those schools that had not responded (see Appendix E). Return envelopes were coded, and respondents were guaranteed that confidentiality would be maintained.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programs were used to organize and tabulate data gathered in the questionnaire. Descriptive statistical analyses were used to determine frequencies and percentages of response. Chi-square values were calculated to evaluate the significance of differences in the responses received from urban schools and those received from rural areas. The open-ended comment responses were categorized and ranked using a frequency count. Responses were reported in tables.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if a gap existed between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes. A questionnaire was sent to 153 elementary media specialists in Georgia public schools; 101 questionnaires were returned, representing 66% (see Table 1).

Table 1

Questionnaires Returned by Type of School with Percentages for Rate of Return

Type of School	Total Schools in Georgia[a]	No. Quests. Sent	Total # Returned	% of Return
Urban	650	103	71	68.9
Rural	370	50	30	60.0
Total	1,020	153	101	66.0

[a]Designated as elementary with at least four grade levels.

Research Question 1

What criteria have influenced media specialists' selection practices? Survey Questions 1-6, 16, and 22-24

were intended to explore this question. While 88.1% of responding media specialists follow a written policy established by their school districts, and 98% used standard and current bibliographies when selecting materials, 43.6% stated they used their own political or aesthetic views when selecting materials. In response to the statement that media specialists should articulate principles of intellectual freedom and oppose censorship, 62.4% responded Yes. Table 2 lists these responses and the frequency in which they occurred for all questions related to Research Question 1 except for Survey Question 6, which is treated separately.

Table 2

Criteria That Influence Media Specialists' Selection Practices

Question	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
1. School district has written selection policy	8 (7.9)	89 (88.1)	4 (4.0)	100
2. Uses standard and current bibliographies in selection process	1 (1.0)	99 (98.0)	1 (1.0)	100
3. Provides a variety of materials in collection	0 (0.0)	100 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	100

(table continues)

Table 2--Continued

Question	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
4. Has read information on censorship and intellectual freedom within last year	18 (17.8)	82 (81.2)	1 (1.0)	100
5. Has a written statement justifying retention of challenged books	64 (63.4)	34 (33.7)	3 (3.0)	100
16. Has used own political or aesthetic views when selecting materials	56 (55.4)	44 (43.6)	1 (1.0)	100
22. School district has policy regarding celebration of Halloween or Christmas	72 (71.3)	24 (23.8)	5 (5.0)	100
24. Media specialists must articulate principles of intellectual freedom and oppose censorship	26 (25.7)	63 (62.4)	12 (11.9)	100

Question 6 asked if someone had objected to a book or other learning material in the last year. Media specialists surveyed reported a Yes response of 35.6%. Table 3 shows the number of schools reporting challenges, either formal or informal.

Table 3

Number of Schools Reporting Challenges

No. Schools Surveyed	Type of School	No. of Challenges n	No. of Challenges %
31	Rural	12	38.7
70	Urban	24	34.8

Of those schools reporting challenges, 72.9% were informal challenges and 27.1% were formal challenges (see Table 4). Challenges were initiated by parents 57.6% of the time and by teachers 13.6% of the time. Table 5 shows the numbers and percentages of those who initiated challenges as a whole and also divides these results by urban and rural populations.

Table 4

Types of Challenges

Type of Challenge	Urban n	Rural n	Total	% of Challenges
Informal	30	13	43	72.9
Formal	14	2	16	27.1
Total	44	15	59	100.0

Profanity was the primary cause (44%) of challenges in Georgia elementary schools, followed by materials about

Table 5

Responsibility for Initiating Challenges

Complainants	Urban n	Urban %	Rural n	Rural %	No. of Total Challenges	% of Total
Parent	25	56.8	9	60.0	34	57.6
Teacher	6	13.6	2	13.3	8	13.6
Administrator	5	11.4	0	0.0	5	8.5
Other	1	2.3	2	13.3	3	5.1
No response	7	15.9	2	13.3	9	15.3

witchcraft and the occult (28%). Table 6 summarizes the total responses and examines the data by urban and rural results.

Table 7 shows what action was taken on challenged materials. Some respondents did not give the disposition of all reported cases. Consequently, the no response category (which also included inappropriate responses) is quite high (27.1%). Materials were retained in 38.9% of the cases, removed in 15.3%, and restricted in 6.8%.

Research Question 2

Were there circumstances under which media specialists engaged in censorship? Survey Questions 7, 8, 11-15, and 17-19 related to Research Question 2. Table 8 displays the results. (Questions 11 and 19 are treated separately.)

Table 6

Nature of Reported Objections

Type of Objection	Urban n	Urban %	Rural n	Rural %	Total n	Total %
Profanity	10	32.3	12	63.1	22	44.0
Occult/witchcraft	9	29.0	5	26.3	14	28.0
Violence/abuse	2	6.5	1	5.3	3	6.0
Illustrations	3	9.7	0	0.0	3	6.0
Age appropriateness	3	9.7	0	0.0	3	6.0
Sexual references	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Content	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	2.0
Suicide	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Realism	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Anti-Semitism	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	2.0
Total	31	100.0	19	100.0	50	100.0

Note. Respondents did not report nature of objection for all reported challenges.

Table 7

Disposition of Challenged Materials

Action	Urban n	Urban %	Rural n	Rural %	Total n	Total %
Retained	16	39.0	7	38.9	23	38.9
Removed	7	17.1	2	11.1	9	15.3
Restricted	4	9.8	0	0.0	4	6.8
Action pending	3	7.3	1	5.6	4	6.8
Change classification	2	4.9	1	5.6	3	5.1
No response	9	22.0	7	38.9	16	27.1
Total	41		18		59	100.0

Table 8

Circumstances Under Which Georgia Media Specialists Censored Materials

Question	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
7. Have physically altered a book due to nudity or policy	66 (65.3)	33 (32.7)	2 (2.0)	100
8. Purchased multi-cultural materials	1 (1.0)	98 (97.0)	2 (2.0)	100
12. Have avoided purchasing materials because of language	38 (37.6)	63 (62.4)	0 (0.0)	100
13. Have avoided purchasing materials due to sexual references	36 (35.6)	65 (64.4)	0 (0.0)	100
14. Have avoided purchasing materials due to witchcraft or occult references	56 (55.4)	44 (43.6)	1 (1.0)	100
15. Have avoided purchasing materials due to magic references	88 (87.1)	13 (12.9)	0 (0.0)	100
17. Have been asked by administrator to remove book before a formal challenge procedure	78 (77.2)	23 (22.8)	0 (0.0)	100
18. Would choose not to purchase a book if you knew it would create bad public relations for the media center	15 (14.9)	82 (81.2)	4 (4.0)	100

Several situations were presented and media specialists were asked to respond how they have acted in similar circumstances. Media specialists who responded indicated that 62.4% had avoided purchasing materials because of language, 64.4% had avoided purchasing materials because of sexual references, and 43.6% had avoided materials that dealt with witchcraft or the occult. If a book was likely to cause bad public relations for the media center, 81.2% of the media specialists said they would not purchase it (see Table 8).

Materials were placed on restricted use by 57% of the media specialists. Research Question 11 addressed this phenomenon. Table 9 displays the results.

Table 9

Explanation of How Materials Are Placed on Restricted Use

Procedure	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
By age	25 (43.8)	31 (54.4)	1 (1.8)	57 (100.0)
By parental permission	26 (45.6)	30 (52.6)	1 (1.8)	57 (100.0)
By teacher permission	26 (45.6)	30 (52.6)	1 (1.8)	57 (100.0)

Question 19 asked media specialists if they had ever removed materials from their established collection. Materials were removed by 52.5% of the respondents for sexual reasons, while 40.6% stated they had removed materials because of language. Table 10 displays the results of Question 19.

Table 10

Reasons for Removing Materials from Established Collections

Reasons for Removal	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
Language	60 (59.4)	41 (40.6)	0 (0.0)	100
Sexual reference or nudity	48 (47.5)	53 (52.5)	0 (0.0)	100
Witchcraft or the occult	77 (76.2)	24 (23.8)	0 (0.0)	100
Stereotyping	76 (75.2)	24 (23.8)	1 (1.0)	100

Research Question 3

Has the uniqueness of the mission of the elementary media center perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information? Survey Questions 9, 10, 20, and 21 were designed to explore this question.

The majority of the respondents (88.1%) felt that the nature of the job of an elementary media specialist necessitates that some censorship take place. In response to the question of whether selection choices are a value judgment (appropriateness for their patrons) as opposed to a First Amendment question, 86.1% reported that was true. The majority of respondents (84.2%) did not feel that the mission of supporting the curriculum interferes with freedom of information (see Table 11).

Table 11

Factors Which Contribute to the Uniqueness of the Mission of the Elementary Media Center

Question	No Number (%)	Yes Number (%)	No Response Number (%)	Total %
9. Feel supporting curriculum takes precedence over establishing a well rounded collection	33 (32.7)	62 (61.4)	6 (5.9)	100
10. Feel the nature of the job necessitates that some censorship take place	10 (9.9)	89 (88.1)	2 (2.0)	100
20. Are selection choices a value judgment as opposed to a First Amendment question?	10 (9.9)	87 (86.1)	4 (4.0)	100
21. Feel the mission of supporting curriculum interferes with freedom of information	85 (84.2)	13 (12.8)	3 (3.0)	100

Open-Ended Question

Question 26 asked media specialists to add any additional comments they had about their role as a media specialist as it relates to material selection and censorship (see Appendix F). A content analysis of the comments was made by the researcher. As each comment was read, categories of responses were developed based on the researcher's interpretation (see Table 12).

Table 12

Other Concerns of Media Specialists Related to Selection and Censorship

Category	n	%
No response	62	61.4
Censorship must occur due to nature of the elementary school population	16	15.8
Censorship occurs due to lack of funding, making selection choices critical	11	10.9
Media specialists must make choices appropriate for the population of the school and community	4	4.0
Department of education should take a stand in favor of intellectual freedom	2	2.0
Media committee very active in screening selections	3	3.0
Books are partially preselected by the school district	2	2.0
Children should be exposed to all types of literature to prepare for the "real" world	2	2.0

(table continues)

Table 12--Continued

Category	n	%
Supporting curriculum is important but the media specialist should not ignore the whole collection	1	1.0
Main focus of the media specialist is to support the curriculum	1	1.0

Note. Multiple responses given by the respondents are included in the table; therefore, total percentages will exceed 100%.

Chi-Square Calculations

To evaluate the differences between schools in a rural setting and those in an urban setting, Pearson chi-square values were calculated for each nondiscussion or fill-in question on the survey. These values revealed a statistical significance on Question 4, 18, and 23 (see Table 13).

Table 13

Items of Significance Between Urban and Rural Respondents

Significant Item	Chi-Square Value	Significance Level
4	6.18796	.01
18	4.56870	.03
23	4.22581	.03

df=1

Demographics

School size. The majority of schools responding (59 or 58.4%) had enrollments ranging from 500 to 1,000. The next highest percentage (36.6% or 36 schools) had enrollments of 0 to 500. Only five schools (5%) had an enrollment from 1,001 to 1,500.

Years of experience. Of the media specialists surveyed, 47 (46.5%) had been media specialists from 0 to 10 years. Forty-four (43.5%) had worked from 11 to 20 years. The remaining 10 (10%) had served from 21 to 30 years.

Degree level. A master's degree was held by 65 (64.3%) of the media specialists. A specialist's degree had been earned by 29 (28.7%) of the respondents, while 7 (7%) of the media specialists performed their job with a bachelor's degree.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine if a gap existed between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes.

Findings

In regard to the questions this study was intended to answer, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Certain criteria have influenced elementary media specialists' selection practices.

2. Georgia elementary media specialists have engaged in censorship in circumstances where the selection of materials would seem to cause bad public relations or where language or sexual references would seemingly be offensive.

3. The uniqueness of the mission of the elementary school media center has perpetuated an interpretation of freedom of information which appears to be more dependent on value judgments and supporting the school curriculum than in a steadfast adherence to standards of intellectual freedom.

Discussion

In response to the theory of Bechtold et al. (1984) that a constructive solution to block censorship is to develop a system of procedures for selecting quality materials, a majority of the Georgia elementary media specialists surveyed stated that they follow a written selection policy as established by their school districts. Professional guidelines provide criteria for selection. Almost all of the media specialists' selection policies are influenced by the use of reviews set forth in standard or current bibliographies. Georgia elementary media specialists select books on the basis of what the subject matter contributes to the curriculum and to the interest of the students, thus providing a wide variety of materials in their collections.

Current knowledge of censorship and/or intellectual freedom information was proclaimed by more than 80% of the media specialists. This was one area that showed a significant statistical difference between the urban and rural populations. Rural areas reported being updated on censorship and intellectual freedom issues much less than urban populations. Less than half of the respondents had prepared written statements justifying the inclusion of controversial materials in their collection in case a challenge occurred, but clearly three-fourths of the respondents stated that their selection choices were not influenced by the threat of a formal challenge.

School districts, for the most part, did not have a policy regarding the celebration of Halloween or Christmas. Thus, an external policy influencing selection of holiday materials did not interfere with freedom of information. The questionnaire was flawed to the extent that it did not ascertain whether schools that reported a written policy concerning the celebration of these holidays had a policy supporting the celebrations or opposing them. It was consequently impossible to ascertain whether the policy had a positive or negative influence on access to information, or whether it influenced selection practices.

The Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A) states that "Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." While nearly two-thirds of the respondents believed that media specialists must articulate principles of intellectual freedom and oppose censorship, nearly half of the Georgia elementary media specialists use their own political or aesthetic views when selecting materials. This figure supports the theory of Scales (cited in Orr, 1990) that media specialists engage in self-censorship. A large number of no responses was recorded for this question (Question 12). This could indicate a contradiction that exists among media specialists concerning perceived expectations of

professionally desirable behavior and what is actually practiced.

Georgia media specialists reported challenges in about one-third of the elementary schools, with parents being the ones who challenged materials most often. This supports Reichman's (1988) theory that the censor of most library materials is a genuinely concerned parent. The most frequent objection was to inappropriate use of language, followed by materials dealing with witchcraft and the occult. This result also supported the research quoted in the literature.

Also supporting the research found in the literature, a majority of Georgia elementary media specialists stated that they preemptively censor with regard to two areas of controversy, language and sexual references, by choosing not to purchase materials. While the research stated that challenges of materials dealing with witchcraft and the occult have increased, the majority of respondents would not avoid purchasing materials on this subject. With respect to removing materials from an established collection, the only area that received a majority affirmative response was sexual reference or nudity.

The AASL and AECT (1988) stated that major barriers between students and resources include imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources, requiring special permission by parents or teachers, and establishing restricted shelves. Reportedly, more than half of Georgia

elementary media specialists restrict materials. Of these, a majority restrict materials by age and parent/teacher permission.

While nearly two-thirds thought media specialists must articulate principles of intellectual freedom and vigorously oppose censorship, over three-fourths stated they would not purchase a book if they knew it would create bad public relations for their media center, supporting Schafly's theory (cited in Orr, 1990) that media specialists regularly and systematically censor materials.

Georgia elementary media specialists surveyed strongly feel that the nature of an elementary media specialist's job necessitates that some censorship take place. Nine out of ten media specialists reported that selection choices are a value judgment appropriate for their patrons as opposed to a First Amendment question. With regard to the educational mission of supporting the curriculum, the majority of media specialists (61.4%) in this study felt that supporting the curriculum takes precedence over establishing a well-rounded collection. An even larger percentage did not see supporting the curriculum interfering with freedom of information.

Many media specialists indicated in the open-ended question that budget limitations greatly influenced their selection choices. Budgets are so limited that by the time selections are made to support the curriculum and for

recreational reading, money is not available to round out the collection or to spend on controversial materials.

The phrase "age-appropriate" was the key criterion used by many of the responding media specialists in making selections for their collections. Though the Georgia elementary media specialists propose an adherence to intellectual freedom, they see no contradiction between that and adhering to a systematic selection procedure that chooses materials appropriate for their patrons. These findings support Manley (cited in Orr, 1990) that choices made by media specialists do not contradict the First Amendment, since those choices in no way restrict the right of others to print their works. He stated that blocking access in a school media center is not blocking access in the private sector. In conclusion, this research shows that the unique mission of the elementary media center has perpetuated a different interpretation of freedom of information due to budget constraints and to the young age of the media center patrons.

Certain limitations of this study may have affected the results. The fact that the respondents were Georgia elementary media specialists precludes the results from being applied to other populations. Overreporting of what is perceived to be socially desirable could have occurred, but in light of the high percentage of media specialists who admitted to preemptive censorship and restriction of their collections, the self-report bias limitation does not seem

pertinent. The large number of nonresponses to Question 24 could have changed the results concerning whether the uniqueness of the elementary library media center perpetuates a different interpretation of freedom of information.

The need for further studies arises from the research and results of this study. Analysis of the demographic data to ascertain the commitment to support intellectual freedom by both years in the profession and the level of education attained would be appropriate. A study of the selection practices of the schools with no reported challenges could be undertaken to identify if preemptive censorship occurred and effectively eliminated the threat of challenges. Finally, an expanded study of elementary schools from different parts of the country would be interesting to see how the results compared to those from Georgia.

This study sought to determine if a gap existed between the perceived expectation that Georgia elementary media specialists support intellectual freedom and the professional reality practiced in their selection processes. The results showed that the majority of the respondents do not hesitate to censor with respect to language and sexual materials. Although they support intellectual freedom, the Georgia elementary media specialists feel their patrons present a special situation in which age-appropriateness plays an important part in their selection decision making. Budget constraints also contribute to preemptive censorship

of materials in order to select quality materials that support the curriculum.

Application

The results of this study increase the awareness of the extent to which censorship is occurring in Georgia elementary media centers and under what circumstances. Whereas most previous research has been conducted at the high school level, this research gives insight into the feelings of elementary media specialists with regard to their patrons and collections. Elementary school children are a special population, thus making media specialists' selection decisions seem more a value judgement in choosing age-appropriate materials for their patrons, rather than a First Amendment question. Nonetheless, this study reiterates the thoughts stated in the literature that a fine line exists between selection and censorship. An awareness of occurrences of censorship may serve as an enlightenment to those who are not as cognizant of the process as First Amendment supporters would like. Most Georgia elementary media specialists make selection choices to serve the mission of supporting the curriculum and serve what they perceive to be a "special" population which affords a different interpretation of intellectual freedom.

REFERENCES

Algeo, A. M., & Zirkel, P. A. (1987). Court cases on teaching literature in the secondary schools. Educational Horizons, 65, 179-182.

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. (1988). Information power: Guidelines for school library media programs. Chicago: Author.

Bechtold, B., Dorman, C., Lott, C., & Van Horn, G. (1984). How to diffuse censorship: Implementing 404.2 of the standards for accreditation of Montana schools (4th ed.). Helena, MT: Montana Association of Teachers of English and Language Arts, Montana State Reading Association.

Burress, L. (1989). Battle of the books: Literary censorship in the public schools, 1950-1985. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Dority, B. (1991). Profile of a censor. The Humanist, 54, 43-44.

Eskey, K. (1992, September 8). School censorship rising, study says. Marietta Daily Journal, p. 5A.

Holland, I. (1980a). On being a children's book writer and accompanying danger, part one. The Horn Book Magazine, 56, 35-42.

Holland, I. (1980b). On being a children's book writer and accompanying danger, part two. The Horn Book Magazine, 56, 203-210.

Jalongo, M. R., & Creany, A. D. (1991). Censorship in children's literature: What every educator should know. Childhood Education, 67, 144-148.

Jongsma, K. S. (1991). Concerns about censorship and intellectual freedom. The Reading Teacher, 45(2), 152-153.

Kister, K. F. (1990). The color of censorship. School Library Journal, 36, 45-46.

Krug, J. F. (1992). The curse of interesting times: Censorship pressures on libraries. Indiana Media Journal, 14(4), 3-6.

Lee, E. (1989). Library censorship after Webster: Has the Supreme Court given the green light to censors? American Libraries, 20, 1044-1048.

McAfee, D. (1992). Why school book challenges succeed or fail. Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, 41(1), 1.

McDaniel, T. R. (1992). On trial: The right to think. Educational Leadership, 49, 85.

Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom. (1992a, May). 5, 78-79.

Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom. (1992b, July). 7, 124.

Orr, L. (Ed.). (1990). Censorship: Opposing viewpoints. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press.

Reichman, H. (1988). Censorship and selection: Issues and answers for schools. Chicago: American Library Association; Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Seligman, D. (1991). Korrect in kindergarten. Fortune, 124, 215-216.

Snow White is the latest title under attack in school. (1992). American Libraries, 23, 359.

Wools, B. (1988). Managing media programs. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibililty to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.

Appendix B

Questionnaire

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please answer the following questions by circling NO/YES or filling in the blanks as required.

PART I

1. Does your school district have a written selection policy for media specialists to use when selecting materials? NO YES

2. Do you use standard and current professional bibliographies when selecting materials to support the instructional program? NO YES

3. Do you provide a variety of books and materials addressed to different levels of readability, maturation, and interests? NO YES

4. Have you within the last year read current references and/or information on censorship and intellectual freedom? NO YES

5. Do you have a written statement justifying why you have challenged books in your collection? NO YES

6. Has someone objected to a book or other learning material in your media center in the last year? NO YES

   If yes:
   How many times? _____
   How many formal challenges? _____
   Who was the objector? (parent, teacher, administrator, other) _____
   What was the objection? _____
   _____
   What was the disposition? _____
   _____

7. Have you ever physically altered a book for language or nudity? NO YES

8. Do you purchase multicultural materials? NO YES

9. Do you feel supporting the curriculum takes precedence over establishing a well rounded collection? NO YES

10. Do you feel the nature of an elementary media specialist's job necessitates that some censorship take place? NO YES

11. Do you ever place materials on restricted use? NO YES

If yes:
- By age NO YES
- By parental permission NO YES
- By teacher permission NO YES

12. Have you ever avoided purchasing an age-appropriate material because of its language? NO YES

13. Have you ever avoided purchasing age-appropriate materials because of sexual reference? NO YES

14. Have you ever avoided purchasing age-appropriate materials because of reference to witchcraft or the occult? NO YES

15. Have you ever avoided purchasing age-appropriate materials because of reference to magic? NO YES

16. Do you ever use your own political or aesthetic views as a standard for determining which books to purchase? NO YES

17. Have you ever been asked by an administrator to remove a book before a formal challenge procedure? NO YES

18. Would you choose not to purchase a book if you knew it would create bad public relations for your media center? NO YES

19. Have you ever <u>removed</u> materials from your established collection ...
- ... because of language? NO YES
- ... because of sexual references or nudity? NO YES
- ... because of witchcraft or the occult? NO YES
- ... because of stereotyping? NO YES

20. Are selection choices a value judgment (appropriate for your patrons) as opposed to a First Amendment question? NO YES

21. Do you feel the mission of supporting the curriculum interferes with freedom of information? NO YES

22. Does your school district have a policy regarding the celebration of Halloween or Christmas? NO YES

    If yes: Is it a written policy? NO YES

23. Are your selection choices influenced by the threat of a formal challenge? NO YES

24. Media specialists must articulate principles of intellectual freedom and vigorously oppose censorship. NO YES

25. Are you required to use review sources when selecting materials? NO YES

26. Please use the space below to add any comments you have about your role as a media specialist as it relates to material selection and censorship.

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART II

Please respond to the following demographic questions.

1. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school? _____

2. How many years of experience as a media specialist do you have? _____

3. Degree level:

    ____Bachelor's
    ____Master's
    ____Specialist
    ____Doctorate

Appendix C

Cover Letter to Pretest Group

November 20, 1992

Dear Media Specialist:

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of Specialist in Education at Georgia State University, I am developing a survey instrument as part of a research study exploring selection practices and censorship in elementary schools in the state of Georgia. The need exists for a field test to determine the validity, clarity, and relevancy of the questions. Feedback from several media specialists in Cobb County is being solicited. This feedback will help to refine the instrument.

Please complete the questionnaire, noting how long it took you to complete. Please write comments next to any survey questions that are unclear to you and complete the few short questions below.

1. Did you understand terms? NO YES

2. Does the questionnaire create a positive impression, one that motivates people to answer it? NO YES

3. Are directions clear? NO YES

4. Does any part of the survey suggest bias on the part of the researcher? NO YES

5. How long did it take you to complete? _____

Thank you for your assistance. Your responses and comments will be kept in strictest confidence. I would appreciate your returning the survey via County mail by November 30.

Sincerely,

Karen Grigg
Media Specialist

Enclosure

Appendix D

Cover Letter to Media Specialists

January 4, 1993

Dear Media Specialist:

I am conducting a research project in partial fulfillment for the degree of Educational Specialist in Library Media Technology at Georgia State University.

Most Americans find censorship distasteful, but the commitment to intellectual freedom becomes cloudy where children are concerned. Some people feel that the responsibility to choose library materials and to reject others is pivotal to the media specialist's mission. Others see this exercise of choice as an infringement on information freedom. It is the purpose of this research project to examine the relationship between selection and censorship in Georgia elementary schools.

I would appreciate your help in this endeavor by taking ten minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. Because this is a highly sensitive subject, confidentiality, of course, will be guaranteed. Envelopes will be separated from the questionnaire upon receipt.

Upon completion, please return the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by Friday, January 15th. The results of the survey will be available in the spring.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and time.

Yours truly,

Karen Grigg
Media Specialist

Enclosure

Appendix E

Follow-Up Letter

January 15, 1993

Dear Media Specialist:

On January 4, 1993, you were sent a survey questionnaire regarding the relationship between media specialists' selection practices and censorship in Georgia elementary schools. Your input is very valuable. If you have not returned your questionnaire, I would appreciate your doing so.

If you have already returned the survey, please accept my sincere appreciation for your time and response.

Sincerely,

Karen Grigg
Media Specialist

Appendix F

Representative Open-Ended Responses

1. I am completely against academic censorship. However, when it comes to selecting fiction, I have no problem choosing some titles over others for elementary age students.

2. Some censorship in an elementary school is definitely important, I feel. Children can't be exposed to everything. If I didn't do some I don't think I would be in good favor with my peers or superiors.

3. Vigorously opposing censorship was ingrained in me during my education as a media specialist, but if that was the case 100% of the time I would find myself in constant turmoil. I go by my written policy, but I think one must rely on common sense in the selection process. I also think it wise to choose one's battles.

4. How can deciding what is appropriate for my students not involve some value judgments on my part? That does not necessarily constitute a conflict with the First Amendment. Some contend that selection itself is a form of censorship.

5. I select materials on the basis of identified need. I do not order books that I know will cause controversy. The media committee has input on selection decisions.

6. I feel I am here to provide appropriate material/media for the grades at this school to have for curriculum and reading enjoyment, but not to lose sight of the parents in their children's education. We must have their support to succeed!

7. We need to be aware of the fine line that divides the two. (intellectual freedom and censorship)

8. With limited budgets media specialists must be increasingly selective in purchasing all materials. When there is a question as to quality, something better can usually be found. Many decisions are subjective even with prescribed selection practices.

9. I feel a child should be exposed to all types of material to better prepare them for the "real" world.

10. While I am against censorship, I feel that the elementary school precludes certain types of materials. I don't view this as censorship as much as selection.

11. In a K-5 school, "age-appropriate" is a very important criterion.

12. To a certain extent, our system of selecting materials is somewhat censored before we make selections. We select and order from a list or group of books that have already been chosen for us.

13. As an elementary media specialist, I see the main focus for an elementary school media center as supporting the curriculum. Doing this greatly influences selection of materials and is in keeping with the goals of an elementary school media specialist.

14. I do feel media specialists should articulate principles of intellectual freedom--but the material must be appropriate for elementary children.

15. Budget limitations are proving to be more damaging to a well balanced collection than censorship.